

West Desert High School 440 Trout Creek via Wendover, Utah 84083

April 19, 2006





Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

West Desert High School 440 Trout Creek via Wendover, Utah 84083

April 19, 2006

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

Myron Cottam, Associate Superintendent

Brett Moulding, Director Curriculum and Instruction

Georgia Loutensock, Accreditation Specialist Curriculum and Instruction

Salt Lake City, Utah

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	ii
Utah State Board of Education	iii
Tintic School District Board of Education and District Administration	1
West Desert High School Administration and Staff	2
West Desert High School Mission Statement and Belief Statements	3
Members of the Visiting Team	4
Visiting Team Report	5
Chapter 1: School Profile	5
Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry	6
Chapter 2: The Self-Study Process	6
Chapter 3: Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness	6
Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals	7
Curriculum Development	8
Quality Instructional Design	8
Quality Assessment Systems	9
Leadership for School Improvement	10
Community Building	11
Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning	12
Chapter 4: Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) Standards I-XI	12
Chapter 5: School Improvement Efforts – Action Plan	14
Chapter 6: Major Commendations and Recommendations of the Visiting Team	15

FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 19, 2006, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of West Desert High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Edgar A. Alder is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at West Desert High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at West Desert High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

250 East 500 South P. O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4200

District 1

Teresa L. Theurer 66 Canterbury Circle Logan, UT 84321 Phone: (435) 753-0740

District 2

Greg W. Haws 5841 West 4600 South Hooper, UT 84315 Phone: (801) 985-7980

District 3

Edward Dalton 1323 Bryan Road Erda, UT 84074 Phone: (435) 882-4498

District 4

Richard Sadler 875 Edgewood Dr. Ogden, UT 84403 Phone: (801) 479-7988

District 5

Kim R. Burningham 932 Canyon Crest Drive Bountiful, UT 84010 Phone: (801) 292-9261

District 6

Tim Beagley 3974 South 3550 West West Valley City, UT 84119 Phone: (801) 969-6454

District 7

Randall A. Mackey 1172 East 100 South Salt Lake City, UT 84102 Phone: (801) 582-4237

District 8

Janet A. Cannon 5256 Holladay Blvd. Salt Lake City, UT 84117 Phone: (801) 272-3516

District 9

Gary C. Swensen 1101 Framewood Ln Taylorsville, UT 84123 Phone: (801) 281-8746

District 10

Laurel Brown 5311 South Lucky Clover Ln Murray, UT 84123 Phone: (801) 261-4221

District 11

Bill Colbert 14866 Village Vista Dr. Draper, UT 84020 Phone: (801) 572-1608

District 12

Mark Cluff 645 West Hubbard Cir Alpine, UT 84004 Phone: (801) 756-7623

District 13

Thomas Gregory 1056 West 1150 South Provo, UT 84601 Phone: (801) 607-4702

District 14

Dixie Allen 218 West 5250 North Vernal, UT 84078 Phone: (435) 789-0534

District 15

Debra G. Roberts Box 1780 Beaver, UT 84713 Phone: (435) 438-5843

Bonnie Jean Beesley*

1492 East Kristianna Cir. Salt Lake City, UT 84103 Phone: (801) 359-0295

Patti Harrington

Executive Officer

Sara V. Sinclair*

1340 North 1500 East Logan, UT 84341-2851 Phone: (435) 754-0216

Twila B. Affleck

Secretary

9/8/2005

^{*}Board of Regents Appointments

TINTIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Janice Boswell	Presiden
Mary Lou Draper	
Ronald Bray	
Ron Nelson	
Dennis Bray	Member
-	

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Ron Barlow	Superintendent
Jeremy Snell	Business Administrator
Brian Underwood.	
Tom Nedreberg	Director, Special Education

WEST DESERT HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Edgar Alder		Principal		
Counseling				
Jill Okelberry		Counselor		
Support Staff				
Cindy Timm		Lunch Supervisor		
		Ed-Net Supervisor		
April Lewis		Custodian		
Mecheller Alder		Custodian		
Marlene Bates				
		Librarian Assistant		
Cindy Barber		Bus Driver		
<u>Faculty</u>				
Scott Anderson	Kathy Hill	Jaren Wadsworth		

WEST DESERT HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of West Desert High School, a small, rural 7-12 grade school in western Utah, is to provide students with educational opportunities in a safe, inviting environment where students are encouraged to be lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- 1. We believe that learning experiences in language, science, social studies, math, applied technology, physical education, information technology, and arts should be engaging, meaningful, interesting and personally relevant.
- 2. We believe in giving special focus to reading, a skill that affects success in all subjects and throughout a person's life.
- 3. We believe in maintaining our school as a safe and caring place where students can develop habits of good citizenship through cooperation with staff, parents and community.
- 4. We believe in helping students discover and develop unique individual talents, abilities, and interests—fostering a realistic, optimistic view of personal potential.
- 5. We believe that each student has unique social, emotional and intellectual needs.
- 6. We believe providing students with a variety of instructional assessment strategies coupled with high expectations will yield high achievement.
- 7. We believe a partnership among students, educators, parents, and community will foster a productive learning environment.
- 8. We believe that the ultimate goal for a school in a democratic society is to educate a productive citizen.
- 9. We believe because of our small community we have a unique opportunity to foster caring and nurturing relationships that will be a source of self-worth now and throughout a student's life.
- 10. We believe that because our size is small that we have a distinct advantage because we can get to know our students personally and help each one of them identify specific activities that will be a source of self-worth and enjoyment now and throughout their lives.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Steven K. Hirase, Murray School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

VISITING TEAM REPORT

WEST DESERT HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

West Desert High School is located in Partoun, Utah, which is in Juab County. West Desert High is a grade 7-12 school and shares a common campus with West Desert Elementary School. The principal serves as the administrator at both schools, as well as Callao Elementary.

West Desert High School is one of the smallest public high schools in the state. Due to this fact, the faculty must assume many duties to ensure the school is operating in a productive and efficient manner. The teaching staff must give instruction in many content areas to provide the students a variety of learning opportunities.

The majority of students who attend West Desert High are third and fourth generation children from the West Desert community. Due to the size of the school, students have many opportunities to participate in athletics, cheerleading, student government, and a variety of other activities provided by the school. In addition, school activities play a significant role in the community, with the majority of community members attending them whether or not they have children or grandchildren attending the school.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

West Desert High School has a relatively young staff that, due to the size of the school, has to cover a wide range of content areas in which staff members may feel they lack expertise.

Due to the nature of West Desert High School, small class sizes allow for attention to individual students' needs. However, the school is working toward developing a more comprehensive way of serving special education students who have moderate/severe disabilities.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

The Visiting Team was impressed by West Desert High School's school profile. The profile was extremely detailed, and it was very apparent that the school understood the accreditation process and the role of the school profile. It is recommended that in the future, West Desert High School consider the addition of Utah Basic Skills Competency Test (UBSCT) results and results from schoolwide curricular assessments.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The school has done an effective job of including essential data in the profile to develop an effective action plan, and prioritized its efforts to ensure the greatest possibility of success.
- As the school proceeds forward with Goal 2, "Increase the knowledge and skills of all teachers to meet the diverse learning needs of all students," and Goal 5, "Improve variety and quality of instructional programs," the focus should also be upon classroom instructional and assessment practices that are scientifically based.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?
 - Interviews with parents, students, and staff members substantiated a high level of participation among the major stakeholders in the accreditation process. Stakeholders viewed the process as an opportunity to affect the school and student achievement in a positive way.
- b) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

A major strength of the accreditation document and the process the school undertook was the detail and accuracy provided. Although the staff is small in number, all members were intimately involved in the development of the profile. The profile raised issues within the school and community that have been addressed in the school's action plan.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

West Desert High School's desired results for student learning are as follows:

Lifelong Learner

- 1. Students should initiate their own learning.
- 2. Students should achieve high standards of literacy.

- 3. Students are able to manage and use information meaningfully.
- 4. Students are able to demonstrate aesthetic awareness.

Complex Thinking

- 1. Students demonstrate a variety of thinking processes.
- 2. Students integrate new information with existing knowledge and experience.
- 3. Students apply thinking skills strategically.

Effective Communication

- 1. Students use appropriate methods to communicate with others.
- 2. Students respond appropriately when receiving communication.

Responsible Citizenship and Employability

- 1. Students demonstrate individual responsibility.
- 2. Students practice a healthy lifestyle.
- 3. Students understand and promote the democratic principles of freedom, justice and equality.
- 4. Students participate in activities that promote the public good, and work toward improving society.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?
 - West Desert High is engaged in a collaborative process to develop a shared vision for the school. A consensus-building process was established that involved all stakeholders in defining the school's beliefs, mission, and goals. To assist the school in the development of these areas, a school beliefs inventory survey was administered. The school's beliefs, mission, and goals were published in the district newsletter to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to study them. A meeting was then held to allow stakeholders to make comments and suggest revisions.
- b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?
 - The school and its major stakeholders have established a set of beliefs that reflect West Desert High School's commitment to student success.
- c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

There is clear alignment among the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. These reflect the school learning community's commitment to meet the individual needs of every student who attends West Desert High School.

Curriculum Development:

- a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?
 - With a staff that is comprised of two teachers, a principal who teaches a portion of his day, and a special education teacher, a high level of collaboration has been critical in addressing the Utah State Core Curriculum. In addition, the school relies on EDNET and the delivery of courses through technology from Tintic High School. This requires an additional level of collaboration with individuals outside of the immediate school community.
- b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?

This is an area that is emerging due to the accreditation process. The staff has addressed how the DRSLs align within the content of each of the individual departments. West Desert High School has yet to define its DRSLs in terms of specific observable and measurable behaviors.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?
 - In each of the classes observed, students were engaged in a various learning activities. While observing classes in a variety of content areas, it was not obvious that the staff was aware of a wide variety of effective instructional strategies and corresponding activities. Although this may have been due to a limited amount of time to observe classes, the Visiting Team recommends that professional development focuses on "best practices" (i.e., cooperative learning, Socratic questioning, etc.), that will actively engage students in learning.
- b) To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?
 - In each of the classes observed, teachers employed a variety of instructional strategies/activities. Teachers generally used multiple strategies during class time,

changing strategies two or three times. With small class sizes, teachers frequently tailor their instruction to meet the needs of the individual learner.

The school currently does not have a limited English proficiency (LEP) population, but does have students with disabilities. All disabled students are part of an inclusive setting in the regular classroom. The special education teacher assists the classroom teacher in making necessary accommodations and modifications in the curriculum to fit the needs of the individual students. The staff has had challenges with meeting the needs of the severe special education population within the regular classroom.

c) To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?

West Desert High School provides a wide variety of opportunities that support student learning. Each staff member is available before and after school hours to assist students with areas in which they are struggling. The school administration has implemented programs that specifically address school goals and student achievement. As an example, a math lab has been established for all students. This class is 20 minutes in length, and all students are required to attend. Instruction focuses around concepts that students are struggling with, as identified by state assessments.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?
 - Expectations have been identified school-wide with the development of the school's DRSLs. The formulation of the DRSLs has been a result of the accreditation process, and school-wide assessments have not been developed.
 - The school has effectively used the Utah state end-of-level CRTs to analyze the data from these tests to drive decision making.
- b) To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?
 - There is limited evidence to indicate that assessments of student learning have been developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards.
- c) To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?

In interviews with stakeholders, including students, it is very evident that the staff is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment at the school. The Visiting Team is confident that the staff engages in fair and equitable assessment of student performance. Students are provided with adequate opportunity to receive instruction to assist them in learning the essential skills and knowledge necessary to pass their tests.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?
 - It was very apparent to the Visiting Team that the academic success that students at West Desert High achieve is a direct result of the strong leadership at the school. The administration has high standards and expectations for student performance and maintains a focus on instructional goals and student learning.
- b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?
 - The school engages in a high level of data-driven decision making. The collection and analysis of data are conducted for the purpose of both problem solving and problem finding, to help the school anticipate and prevent potential problems.
 - As the school engaged with the accreditation process, students, parents, and members of the staff held meaningful roles in the decision-making process. In speaking with participants in this process, the Visiting Team noted a high level of satisfaction with the process and a sense of responsibility and shared ownership in the school's goals and action plans.
- c) To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?
 - The school consistently monitors student progress in achieving mastery on state standards as identified in the Utah State Core Curriculum. The data collected is used to improve student learning and instructional effectiveness.
 - It is recommended by the Visiting Team that the school's assessment system be expanded to include school-wide assessments of the DRSLs.
- d) To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?

Stakeholders all indicated strong support and commended the administration for the creation of a safe and positive learning environment that supports student achievement.

e) To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?

The human, instructional, financial, and physical resources of the school appear to be allocated to support the school's mission and goals and used in ways that support student learning.

f) To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?

The school administration has established school-wide structures to encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning. Many individuals indicated that the school was the focal point of community activities. The school leadership has taken advantage of this and has successfully engaged the community in a shared responsibility for student learning.

Community Building:

a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

As previously mentioned, the school is a focal point of community involvement. Many members of the community are actively involved with many aspects of the school. The school is the largest employer in the community. In addition, other community members may assist as volunteers, substitutes, etc., in the smooth operation of the school. The Visiting Team found a strong climate of community and pride demonstrated through parental involvement, staff dedication, and administrative support.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

The school engages families as partners in students' education and as full partners in decisions related to the school that affect their children and families. In addition, the school has established collaborative networks of support with community members and groups, youth-serving agencies, and clergy and government leaders, as well as leaders of higher education and business.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

a) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?

The school is clearly committed to school improvement through professional development activities. The school staff members participate in professional development that is centered on student improvement and learning. There is a consistent effort by staff members to facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge and skills that support student achievement. However, professional development opportunities are sometimes a challenge for the school due to issues related to the geographical isolation of the school.

b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

The administration works to develop a culture of collaboration and improvement. The school supports the work of individuals and groups responsible for implementing school improvement initiatives while sustaining the commitment to continuous improvement.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met. West Desert High School's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students. The assigned personnel for guidance includes a minimum of one full-time person for each 400 students enrolled.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met. The school plant provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a

positive educational atmosphere. However, adequate administrative and staff work space necessary for the efficient and effective operation of the school is lacking.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is met. The school library media program is a primary resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support.

Standard V - Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interests of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

This standard is partially met. All professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are properly endorsed for the subjects they are assigned. Due to the size of the school (24 students—2.5 teaching FTEs) it is not possible to have teachers endorsed in all areas.

Standard VIII - Administration

This standard is met. The administration of West Desert High School provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

Standard IX - Teacher Load

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or Northwest.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met. West Desert High supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional experiences and opportunities for learning to take place.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a) To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?

The strength of the self-study was the alignment of the action plan with the components of the report. The school profile, beliefs, mission, DRSLs, departmental analyses, and focus groups provide the school with an accurate view of the school, including areas for growth. The action plan has been written to address the critical areas for follow-up.

b) To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?

The school was successful in building a high level of commitment to the school's action plan with all stakeholders through the collaborative process established in the accreditation process. Stakeholders understand that accreditation is a process of continued progress, and not a one-time event. The Visiting Team is confident that there is sufficient commitment to continue with the implementation of the action plan.

c) How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?

The school administration has demonstrated skill in the implementation of school-wide initiatives. The Visiting Team is confident that the action plan will be successfully implemented, with the foresight to make adjustments to the plan when stakeholder feedback and/or data indicate adjustments need to be made.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the principal and professional staff for their dedication to the students of West Desert High School. The staff faces many unique challenges due to the size of the school, but is able to meet the learning needs of the students.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for the high level of collaboration with stakeholders through the accreditation process. It is evident that the group takes the task seriously and is committed to the success of the school and the achievement of the students.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for the high level of academic success, as evidenced by the state end-of-level assessments and the ranking of the Sutherland Institute.
- The Visiting Team commends the support staff members for their contribution to the smooth operation of the school. Although the school is an older building, it is well kept and provides the students with an environment conducive to learning.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school develop school-wide assessments that provide information on students' progress in the State Core Curriculum throughout the school year.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the professional development activities conducted by the school focus on instructional practices that address challenges related to providing instruction to an academically diverse group (i.e., differentiated instruction, cooperative education, etc.).
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school clearly define each of the DRSLs in terms of behaviors that are observable and measurable. It is further recommended that the school develop an assessment to indicate student progress on the DRSLs.